Chani sat in her math class, barely getting through a single problem because her mind kept going back to Martin. Each time she tried to tackle the same math problem she would see him in the hallway, holding the Doberman in a passionate embrace. It was at those times she would feel a constricting in her chest, making her gasp and start breathing heavily. Part of her wanted to see him again so that he could tell her the truth about what happened, but the rest of the young feline wanted nothing to do with the teenage mink.

When the teacher walked by her desk, he put his hand on her shoulder. “Is everything alright, Miss Durai?” he asked, “You seem a little distracted.”

“I… I’m fine.” Chani said softly, “Just… I’ll be fine…”

He nodded. “Just make sure you finish those math problems by tomorrow’s class. Alright?”

“Okay.”

The teacher continued up to the front, reaching his desk as the bell rang. Chani gathered up her stuff, without even hearing what was being said around her. Zipping up her backpack, she slipped it over one shoulder as she headed for the door. Out in the hallway, she looked around, part of her hoping to see Martin while the rest of her unsure about what to say if she did. He was nowhere to be found though, so she started on her way to the cafeteria.

Andrea arrived at the lunch line shortly after Chani, the porcupine watching her even as they went through and gathered food onto their trays. When the pair exited the lines, they met up at a table with Tanya, who was holding three seats for them and Martin. The latter, however, hadn’t shown his face since World History. “I looked outside for our favorite mink, but he was nowhere around.” she answered the porcupine and kitty’s unspoken question.

“I guess we’ll just have to get half of the story then.” Andrea commented, “Okay, Chani. What’s going on between you and Martin?”

Looking down, the feline sighed. “I’m fine.”

“Bullshit!” Andrea hissed, “You’ve been moping about, acting distracted, and basically not yourself all morning. Now either you tell me what the deal is, or I’ll find out from Martin myself.”

“Andrea… it’s not really your problem…” Chani tried to deflect her friend from asking again, but that just caused the porcupine to glare at her.

“Whatever is going on between you both is screwing up my team, so guess what ‘princess’ it most definitely is my problem.” Andrea retorted.

Tanya watched the exchange with a twitch of an ear, her eyes going from one girl to the other. “Please, just tell us what’s going on, Chani.” she urged.

Giving a sigh, Chani bowed her head so that she was looking at her tray. “Fine. After school last night, Martin and I went out… on a date.” She let that statement sink in before she continued. “We had just finished dinner, and were about to go see a movie when I had to go to the bathroom, but when I came out…” tears welled up in her eyes as she said the next part, “he was kissing that Doberman bitch.” She shook her head as the last two words left her mouth. “I couldn’t stand it, and when I saw them kissing, I just… I slapped him and ran off.”

It was then that Chani felt a hand smack her upside the back of the head, causing her to look back at Andrea. “Are you insane?” the porcupine asked.

“What?” Chani asked in response.

“You’ve known him for how long?” Andrea asked, “Three days? And you’re already trying to date the guy?”

“A year…” Chani murmured.

“What?”

Chani gave a sigh, “We were in junior high together.” she said softly, “I didn’t really get a chance to talk with him, but I saw how nice he was to others, especially children. I had a crush on Martin, but it seemed like I never had a chance to even meet him.” She gave a small sigh, “Over the summer, I would constantly see him in game stores and book stores, the library, or other places while Jenny, Lee and I were out.”

“Basically, you never had a chance to talk with him because you were always with other people?” Andrea asked. She then shook her head, “Then he comes to our class…”

“No.” Chani corrected, “I have art class with him, but he always seemed so distracted by schoolwork that I never had a chance to really talk with him.” She gave a small sigh, “It wasn’t until he came to our World History class that I got to even be in close proximity with him. Then we saw him at lunch, out there… alone… I decided that I didn’t want to watch him from afar anymore.” Tears leaked out of her eyes as she stared at her lunch. “But he’s a jerk for not talking to me, and I don’t want to see him ever again.”

Andrea just sighed, shaking her head, “You wait all of that time, and you’re willing to give him up? Just like that?” she asked, “You must not really care for him.”

Blinking, the feline looked over at Andrea, “What do you mean?” she asked.

“What I mean is that you seemed to have this strange belief that Martin even wanted to kiss that bitch.” Andrea answered, “You have to remember who she is, Chani. She’s the type of drama queen who likes making others feel like shit. I used to be friends with her until I saw what we did to people, and then kicked her to the curb. She gets off on fucking with people, and her favorite thing to do is make people think just what you’re thinking now.”

Chani shook her head, “But… he was enjoying that kiss! I’m positive.” she countered, “I mean, he even had his hands on her boobs and everything.”

Andrea shook her head slowly. “How flat were they?” she asked.

For a brief moment, Chani blinked “What?”

“How flat were that Doberman’s tits?” Andrea asked a second time.

The feline turned away blushing, “I… I don’t remember. Maybe fully pressed into her chest. All I remember was her arms around his neck, his hands on her boobs, and them kissing.”

Shaking her head, Andrea brought her hand up, rubbing at her eyes, “We need to get the full story from Martin before I pass any judgment.”

“But, he was kissing her…”

“Martin may have been trying to push her away, Chani!” Andrea growled.

“If he were, I’m sure that he had enough strength to push away someone who doesn’t weigh much more than me.” Chani remarked, looking away.

“Possibly, but that girl knows ways to make something look the way she wants it to look.” Andrea shook her head. “Again, I want to get the story from Martin’s perspective first.”

Lunch was eaten within relative silence for about ten minutes before Tanya spoke for the first time since the entire conversation began. “I take the bus with him, so… I can try asking Martin about what happened from his perspective.” she offered.

With a shake of her head, Andrea gave a sigh. “No, I don’t want to push him. He didn’t look well when first period ended.” She sat there, looking at her food, “We’ll talk to him at lunch tomorrow. Give him that time to get over whatever’s wrong with him.”

Chani sighed, but nodded. “Okay.”

For the rest of lunch, the trio of girls didn’t talk, only sat there and ate. When the bell rang for them to return to class, they did so without so much as a backward glance. Over the course of the next few hours, they went to their individual classes, with Chani looking forward to her final class of the day. It was on her walk to the art room that she noticed a distinct lack of fluffy tail in the crowd. Upon entering the classroom, she saw that Martin’s desk was empty.

Sitting down across from the desk, she watched as the teacher walked around, passing out their previous day’s assignments. When he arrived at her table, the feline looked up “Mr. Gerard, do you know where Martin Thomas is today?” she asked, “He doesn’t seem to be here.”

The kindly raccoon looked at Chani for a brief moment before looking over at the table. “Oh. I thought you were told.” Mr. Gerard commented, “Mr. Thomas went home early after he was found vomiting in the bathroom. His mother was called, and she arrived to take him to the doctors.”

She blinked, with her jaw dropping open, “When was this?” Chani asked.

“About nine-thirty.” Mr. Gerard answered, “I’m not sure what happened, but I was in the office when a teacher brought him into the nurse’s office. He didn’t look too well.”

“Oh… okay. Thank you for telling me.” Chani commented with a cold feeling of dread settling in the bottom of her stomach. ‘Oh god! I hope he’s alright.’ she thought silently. Even as she sat there attempting to sketch out the bottle and bowl of fruit, her mind was now thinking of Martin in a different manner. Now she was worried about him, unsure of what happened, and why he would’ve been throwing up before lunch.

The entire class seemed empty to her, as she barely touched her drawing. Most of the time was spent moping about in class while worry ate at her. When the bell rang, Chani packed up her stuff, turning in her assignment, and headed off to the bus. Having kept her homework and books with her, the teenage feline never went to her locker. If she had, she would’ve seen a small square of paper on top of her books, having been folded and written on throughout the day by a particular mink.

Climbing the steps into the bus, Chani sat down with her eyes closed and a sigh escaping her lips. While everyone else talked, creating a cacophony of voices, she thought only about her homework until the bus pulled in at her stop. Getting off, she started toward home while Jenny and Lee leaped off their own bus, to walk beside their sister. Even as they talked, she couldn’t hear what either of them said, her own mind preoccupied with both homework and worry for Martin’s condition.

Across town, Martin was just coming out of the hospital with his mother, his tail twitching in annoyance. “I told the school nurse that it was just an upset stomach.” he groused while rubbing his abdomen.

“Your teachers were worried about you, honey. That’s all.” Andais commented.

“I know, but… now I’ve missed half a day of school, and you missed half a day of work.” Martin shook his head, “All for a little stomach ache.”

“From what your teachers said, you were throwing up all over the bathroom…”

Martin sighed, “What a bunch of drama queens. I went into the bathroom to splash some water on my face, but wound up having to throw up my breakfast.” He then shook his head, “Next thing I know, I’m getting escorted to the nurses office, and you’re being called to come pick me up.” For a few seconds he stopped grousing, while shoving his hands in his pockets. “It’s not right, mom.”

Andais looked at her son as they arrived at the car, “Honey, they have to think about the welfare of the other children in school…” she said as she unlocked the doors.

“I wasn’t contagious. Food poisoning isn’t contagious, mom.” Martin remarked as he opened the door and slipped inside.

“Yes, but they didn’t know that it was food poisoning.” Andais countered as she sat down in the driver’s side of the car, “For all they knew you could’ve been sick and just been determined to go to school even while not feeling well.”

“But… if I’m not feeling well, I’ll just stay home and have you call the school up to tell them.” Martin said as he brought the seatbelt buckle across his chest. “Now everyone will think I have some contagious disease, or they’ll take pity on me for being sick. I don’t want that.”

“The school doesn’t know that.” Andais remarked as she did the same, slipping the key into the ignition. “Why does it matter what people think of you in school?”

“Why does it matter what business partners, or clients think of you?” Martin asked in response.

“Point taken, although in its most basic essence it’s still not the same thing.” Andais commented as she backed out of the parking space and pulled out of the lot.

Martin shook his head. “Yes it is, mom. I still have to work alongside these people, so anything that happens to me is reflected by each of them.”

Giving a sigh, she looked for coming traffic and then pulled out to drive for home. “Okay, but I’m more worried about what lessons you may have missed by being sick.”

Looking away, the young mink gave a sigh as his tail curled around him. “I’m doing alright in school.” he remarked.

“If I remember, your algebra grade needs to come up.”

A scowl passed over Martin’s face. “Yeah. I know.”

“Didn’t you leave before your Algebra class started?”

“Not by choice, mom.”

“We’ll just have to stop by the school, and pick up your assignments for the day.”

Turning away from his mother, Martin scowled at the thought of having to go back into the school. As time passed, Andais allowed the car to descend into silence, her own mind running through what happened when she picked him up. ‘*I’m going in with him.*’ she thought.

Pulling into the parking lot, she stopped the car and turned off the ignition as Martin opened the door. Doing the same, she stepped out of the vehicle, and started for the front doors of the building along with her son. “Why are you coming too, mom?” she heard to the side.

“I have a few questions for the faculty.” Andais answered.

Opening the door, Martin let his mother go first, while watching her walk forward and hearing her heels clack onto the linoleum. When she opened the door to the main office, Andais saw the same secretary as when she came to pick up her son. “I believe that I asked for my son’s lesson plan to be compiled when I came to pick him up before lunch?” she said without preamble, “I would like that now, please.”

The secretary looked up at the mink with a shrug. “We’re not responsible for compiling a student’s work for them.”

“Very well, then I want to talk with the principal.”

“I’m sorry, but he’s… **HEY!!!**” Andais heard as she walked past the receptionist’s desk and stalked down the short hallway to the principal’s office. “You can’t just barge in like that!”

Hearing voices coming from the conference room, she instead opened that door, and walked into a meeting in progress. Everyone blinked as Andais stood there, glaring at all of the teachers in kind. “Good.” she said as she walked in, “The teachers I need are here. I believe that I asked for a compilation of my son’s lessons for today, but nobody seemed interested in giving up that information. Now. I am here, and I want my son’s lesson plans.”

“We are currently in a meeting…”

“I don’t give a shit!” Andais spat. “This school has done nothing but spit at my family since I enrolled my son, and now I’m fed up with all of the bullshit!” She glared at each teacher, her crystalline gaze causing more than a few of them to look away. “Today was a good example of the rampant disrespect and harassment that my son has received over the years.”

“Mrs. Thomas, we told you why…” the principal started to say.

“Food poisoning!” she shouted. “Any moron could see that, and yet you had me take him out of school, forcing me to leave my job, all so that I could take him to a hospital he didn’t have to go to, in order to be told exactly what he said was going on with him!” Andais shook her head, glaring at the group. “Either your medical staff, and your teachers are inept, or everything that my son has been saying about this school is true. Now which is it?”

Nobody spoke for several seconds, with Andais glaring at the collection of teachers. After nearly a minute, the principal started to speak. “Mrs. Thomas, I have no idea what you’re talking about. Our only duty here is to teach the students, and ensure a safe environment for each of them. Your son was found vomiting in the bathroom, and we became concerned. I assure you…”

Andais shook her head “No. I assure you, that if my son has any problems with another teacher, or feels like he’s not being heard again, I will bring a harassment suit against the school board, with specific incidents itemized.” She looked around the room for only a few seconds before returning to her initial comment. “Now, I’m going to stand out in the lobby with my son, and I will be ensuring that he gets all the information he needs to finish his coursework for the day. If even one of his teachers attempts to shirk this duty, I will make sure that they never work in a teaching capacity again.” Without another word spoken, she slammed the door behind her as she left the room, and rejoined her son at the front of the office.

The secretary sat there with the phone to her ear, talking to someone just as Andais sat down in the lobby. She hung up with the person only a few seconds later, while the matronly mink crossed her legs and opened up a magazine. For nearly fifteen minutes she sat there before a police car pulled up in front of the school. Getting out of the car, a German shepherd strolled into the front office, only to see the mink sitting in a chair. “Hello, Andi.” he said familiarly.

“Hello, Jake.” Andais said with a smile, while Martin sat beside her. “Let me guess, the secretary called, informing the police that a woman was causing problems at the school?”

“Correct in one.” Jacob commented casually. “What’s the problem?”

“You remember all the problems I told you about my son having at school?” Andais said casually.

Jacob nodded, “I do remember to telling me about the harassment he’s gotten from the teachers over the course of the year, and I remember suggesting getting an attorney…”

“I just informed the entire faculty of my decision to hire an attorney if they didn’t stop with their constant garbage.” Andais said while glancing past the police officer to notice how the secretary just sat there in shock.

“Good for you. Just let me know if you need the list. I still have it secured.”

“Oh. Do be a sweetie and add a misdiagnosis of food poisoning onto that as well.”

That caused Jacob to shake his head. “Let me guess, they had you take him to the hospital to make sure he wasn’t contagious with something?” the canine asked.

“Correct in one.” Andais retorted.

Standing up, he nodded. “I’ll do that once I get home.” Jacob remarked before turning to the secretary. “If there’s nothing else that you need, I have a shooting that you’ve managed to pull me away from. Now if you’re quite done wasting my time, I’m off to see if I can help secure the crime scene.”

The secretary blanched as he turned and walked out of the school, with Andais glaring at the woman. Roughly five more minutes later, the conference room door opened to disgorge its contents into the lobby. Seeing the shocked looks on the faces of the faculty at the sight of the two minks sitting in the chairs caused the matronly mink to glare at them in turn. “What?” she asked, “Did you think I wouldn’t be here when you came out?” She didn’t miss the glare the principal leveled at the secretary, nor how three of her son’s teachers shifted uncomfortably. “Give my son his lessons, and we’ll be on our way.”

She watched as four of Martin’s teachers told him which books, or lessons he needed to complete, with her son writing down each one in a small notepad he kept with him. “Thank you.” she heard her son say even as they prepared to leave. “I’ll have my homework done by the time I come to school tomorrow.”

None of the teachers said anything to Andais, the obvious tension causing her to glare at each of them again. “Come on, honey. I still have to pick up Yvette and Yvonne from school.”

“Okay, mom.”

Both of them left the school, heading for the primary school only a couple of miles away. Throughout the entire time Martin and his mother were on the road to both his school and his sister’s school, he never thought to open his satchel bag to check the missed calls on his cell phone. Nobody would speak again until they had picked up Yvonne and Yvette from school.

Across town, however, Chani stood by the phone, her ear pressed to the receiver while Jenny stood beside her. When she heard the beep, she sighed. “Martin, this is Chani… again… I was just hoping to catch you and see if you’re alright. I found out that you went home from school early and hope that you feel better soon.” she blush, flustered about what else to say, “Hopefully I’ll see you at school tomorrow. Bye.” With that she hung up.

“Messenger service?” Jenny asked.

Chani nodded. “I guess that he doesn’t want to speak to me right now.” she commented as she looked down.

Jenny pulled her older sister into a hug, holding her close. “Come on, let’s go do something fun.”

“I’m not in the mood…” Chani remarked as she pulled away from her sibling. “Perhaps I should just do my homework.” she murmured. Jenny huffed as she watched her sister start for her bedroom before the feline stopped and looked back. “Thank you for telling me about what you saw at the theater that night though.”

Giving a smile, Jenny nodded “How could I not?” she asked. “You just looked so torn up about whether or not to make sure Martin was alright, so I thought that it was about time you heard what happened from my perspective.”

Nodding with a swish of her tail, Chani thought only about what she had seen, and the possibility that what she saw, and what had happened, might not have been the same thing. Once she was in her bedroom, she started on her homework, her mind constantly flitting between her reading and the prospects for what Jenny’s revelation might mean. Even so, she dipped into schoolwork, intent on not thinking about what happened between her and Martin until such time as they had a chance to talk fully.

Upon reaching home, the young mink set his satchel bag onto the couch. Opening it, he extracted each of his books for his classes, and headed toward the dining area. Sitting with his back to the kitchen, he sighed as he looked over his math homework. This was their agreement on the way home. Andais would ensure that he did his course work while keeping distractions beyond arms-length while she made dinner. Martin even enjoyed her soft humming, the tune causing him to relax even as he did his math homework.

After twenty minutes of frustration, Martin decided to work on his social studies assignment instead. Thankfully that only lasted about ten minutes before his mother informed the family that it was time for dinner. Clearing off the table of his books, binders, and pens, the mink helped his mother set the table. Dinner consisted of taco salad, with Andais setting out a large tray, sectioned off with lettuce, tomato, onion, cheese, and salsa with dipping spoons, or tongs set in each section of the tray. The only thing that she didn’t put on a tray was the generic bag of cheese flavored corn chips.

While his mother crushed chips onto her plate, Martin set down a bed of lettuce before heading over to dish up his taco seasoned ground beef. Once he had his second layer, the young mink added cheese, onions, tomatoes, and salsa until he had a small mound of food. Afterward, he headed over to the refrigerator. Pulling out the milk, he poured himself a glass. “Who else wants milk?” he asked, looking back.

“Me!” he heard his mother and sisters call out.

Nodding, he pulled out three more glasses, and started pouring milk into them. When his sisters came to get their food, he would wait until they were done with adding meat to each of their plates before handing over a glass. His mother, having already gotten her mat, sat at the table while he carried hers over, and set it down beside her plate. “Thank you, honey.” Andais said with a smile.

“You’re welcome, mom.”

Eating dinner together, the family spoke very little about their day, probably because Yvonne and Yvette had managed to detail their entire day on the car ride home. Martin remained silent, still rather upset about what happened at school earlier that day, while Andais kept quiet for much of the same reasons. At the end of the meal, Andais started to wash dishes while her children cleared the table, and put the leftovers away. “I want you back at the table, working on your homework, Martin.” she called out as she picked up a plate, and started to scrub the food particles off.

“I was just going to check my phone…” he started to say, only to be interrupted.

“To the table, young man!” Andais ordered, her voice authoritative. “Whatever is on your phone can wait until after you’re done with your homework.”

Giving a sigh, he dropped his satchel back onto the couch, and headed straight for the kitchen table with his books and binders. Martin sat down at the table, opening his math book, only to be instantly flustered by the same math problems that he’d been unable to figure out earlier. Using a couple of scrap pieces of paper, he wrote out the equations, and the steps as they were outlined in the chapter. While his mother set out the dishes to dry, he gave a sigh, and reread each paragraph in his math textbook about how to work out the mathematic equations.

He was still trying to figure out the intricacies of the math homework when his mother walked up behind him. Leaning forward, she pressed her breasts against the top of his shoulder blades, her arms wrapping around his chest. “Are you having trouble with something, honey?” she asked.

“Um… no. I think I’m just not getting the right idea about the math.” Martin commented.

Andais looked over his shoulder, reading the page. “I could help you out if you need.”

“No. I think I’ll be fine, mom.”

“Really? Because it’s no problem for me to help.”

Martin shook his head slowly, “I really should try to figure it out for myself.” he commented.

“Okay. You go ahead and work on the problem, but if you’re not done by the time I get out of the bath, then how about I help you out, honey?” Andais asked.

Giving a sigh, Martin nodded. “Okay, mom.”

Standing up, Andais headed for the hallway that would lead to her bedroom, leaving her son to work on his math homework himself. Looking in at her daughters, she saw that they too were tackling homework, and felt confident enough to leave her family to relax for a while. Pouring herself a hot bath, she added some bubble solution, stripped and sank into the heated water, needing a good soak.

Remaining in the dining room, Martin struggled to finish each math problem, his ears laying back while his tail twitched in annoyance. ‘Come ON! This is the last bit of homework that I have to deal with! Why can’t I figure this crap out?!’ he thought before turning his head to look at his satchel bag. ‘I could always call Chani, so that I can ask for her help.’ Walking over, he picked up the satchel bag, and pulled out his phone, only to see his cell phone powered off. ‘Crap.’ was all he thought before he started for the stairs.

Heading up to his room, Martin pulled his charger cable up and set his phone onto his desk, plugging the cable into the bottom of his phone. “I just hope I didn’t miss any important phone calls.” he thought aloud. Giving a sigh, he shook his head as he turned around, and headed back downstairs to continue doing his math homework.

Andais stopped her bath little more than twenty minutes after it started. Dressing in a nightgown, she wrapped a fluffy robe around her, tying it around her waist seconds later. Taking the time to brush her damp hair after she toweled it off, and left it down. Walking into the living room, she found her son still hunched over his textbook and scrap paper, one hand under his cheek while the other scribbled out formulae that she recognized. “How is it going, honey?” she asked.

Martin sighed, “Not too well, mom. I could really use some help.”

“Okay, honey.” Andais said with a small smile, “Now, let’s see what we have to work with.” Looking over the math book, she cocked her eyebrow at some of the math equations. Glancing at the scrap paper, she noticed what her son had been doing, and shook her head. “Well, first you’re doing the Algebra problems backward.” Moving her face forward, she dropped a finger to the math problems, and smiled. “Just try doing the problems like this…” and started to describe the best way for her son to manage his homework.

Looking over her son’s shoulder, Andais watched her son do his math homework, her breasts pressing against Martin’s back while her hips wiggled with her tail. More than an hour later, she watched as he finished his homework. “Whew! Done.” he sighed. “Thank you, mom. I don’t think I would’ve ever gotten that done without your help.”

For several seconds she just stood there, smiling at her son. “You’re welcome, honey. Now go ahead and put your homework into your bag, then get a shower and go to bed.” Andais instructed. She then kissed him on the cheek, then nuzzling shortly afterward, before standing up fully to give her son some room. “I’m going to make sure the girls are asleep, and then head off to bed myself.”

“Sleep well, mom.”

“You too, honey.”

Watching as his mother left to head down the hallway toward her bedroom, Martin gave a sigh, shaking his head. Replacing all of his homework into his satchel bag, the young mink walked upstairs, pulled out a pair of boxers to sleep in, and started up his shower. By the time he was done toweling off, exhaustion pulled at his consciousness.

Heading into his bedroom, he sat down on the bed, turning so that as he slid his feet under the covers, and placed his head on his pillow. Even as he lay there, going over everything that happened during the day, with sleep pulling him into its embrace, his mind kept telling him that he’d forgotten something important.

A single thought pulled at his mind. ‘*Chani! You forgot to call her!*’ Opening his eye, he looked at the clock. ‘*It’s almost midnight. She would be in bed.*’ Giving a yawn, he settled down to sleep. “I’ll call her in the morning.” he murmured as he finally fell asleep. Little did he know that, as he slipped into unconsciousness a young feline sat up with the phone in front of her, the pink ear and tail-tip flickering in annoyance.